

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 062817

FOL REPEAT STATE 062817 SENT ACTION JERUSALEM MARCH 20, 1975

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 062817

TOSEC 807

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT

SUBJECT: BERLINGUER AND THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE

1. SUMMARY. ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) LEADER BERLINGUER IN MAJOR SPEECH TO 14TH PCI CONGRESS MARCH 18, SOUGHT TO EXPLAIN CONCEPT OF HISTORIC COMPROMISE TO A PCI RANK AND FILE MEMBERSHIP CLEARLY PUZZLED BY ITS LEADERSHIPS' TACTICS. IN DOING SO, BERLINGUER, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, NOTED THAT A US VOICE IN WORLD AFFAIRS WAS INDISPENSABLE, OPPOSED UNILATERAL ITALIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO, EMPHASIZED THAT ITALY WAS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT FROM PORTUGAL, AND STATED THE PCI WAS IN NO HURRY TO ENTER THE AREA OF ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. WHETHER THE WHY AND WHEREFORE OF THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE TACTIC IS NOW CLEARER IN THE PCI RANKS REMAINS TO BE SEEN. END SUMMARY.

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1. US: BERLINGUER SAID THAT A US VOICE IN WORLD AFFAIRS

COMMENSURATE WITH ITS POWER AND ECONOMIC POTENTIAL WAS
INDISPENSABLE, WHILE EUROPE MUST ASSERT ITS NON-ALIGNED
AUTONOMY.

3. NATO: THE PCI DOES NOT POSE THE QUESTION OF ITALY
PULLING OUT OF NATO SINCE SUCH UNILATERAL MOVES FROM ONE OR
THE OTHER BLOC IN EUROPE WAS UNFEASIBLE, IMPRACTICAL, AND
WOULD HINDER OR EVEN OVERTURN THE PROCESS OF DETENTE. IN
ITALY, SUCH A MOVE WOULD REOPEN A FURROW ON THE DOMESTIC

LEVEL BETWEEN THE DEMOCRATIC AND POPULAR FORCES.

4. PORTUGAL: IN CALLING FOR THE DEFEAT OF RASCIST
REACTIONARY FORCES AND REGIMES, BERLINGUER NOTED THAT IT
WAS NOT EASY TO BUILD A TRULY DEMOCRATIC REGIME AFTER
YEARS OF DICTATORSHIP IN PORTUGAL. HE CAUTIOUSLY COMMENTED
THAT ITALY WAS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT FROM PORTUGAL AND THE
SOCIALIST ROAD FOR THE DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIALIST RENEWAL OF
ITALY WAS ALSO DIFFERENT.

5. HISTORIC COMPROMISE: THE QUESTION OF THE PCI ENTRY
INTO THE AREA OF GOVERNMENT WAS "UNDOUBTEDLY DECISIVE"
BUT THE PCI WAS "NOT IN A HURRY". AS FOR THE SOCIALISTS
(PSI), IT WAS FATUOUS TO THINK THAT ANY PCI AGREEMENT
WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DC) WOULD EXCLUDE THEM.

6. COMMENT: ACCORDING TO FBIS SUMMARY, THE TONE OF THE
BERLINGUER KEYNOTE SPEECH WAS REMARKABLE FOR ITS OBVIOUSLY
UNPROVOCATIVE AND CONCILIATORY TONE. IT WAS DESIGNED TO
CALM FEARS THAT THE ITALIAN COMMUNISTS WERE A THREAT TO
ANYONE'S INTERESTS, WHETHER CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT OR US.
PARTICULAR STRESS WAS PUT ON THE PCI'S LACK OF HURRY IN
REACHING THE AREA OF GOVERNMENT -- A THEME REPEATED IN
RECENT DAYS BY OTHER LEADING ITALIAN COMMUNISTS. BERLING-
UER'S SPEECH WILL BE DEBATED DURING THE REST OF THE PARTY
CONGRESS, BUT WILL NO DOUBT HAVE MAJORITY SUPPORT. ITS
PURPOSE WAS TO PRESENT CALM CONFIDENCE IN AN INEVITABLE
ACCESSION TO POWER BY THE COMMUNISTS, DIRECT OR INDIRECT,
IN ITALY SOME DAY. INGERSOLL

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